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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are our mighty fortress. Lord, You have done wonderful deeds in our Nation's history. When we have cried to You in seasons of distress, You have answered us. Though our faith is sometimes small, inspire us to speak to our mountains until they move. We thank You for Your promise in Philippians 4:13, that we can do all things because of Your strength. Today, strengthen our lawmakers, granting them courage and wisdom for the living of these days. And Lord, we thank You for the heroism of the Nashville police.

We pray in Your awesome Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 29, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

REPEALING THE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 316, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 316) to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq.

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 15, to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

S. 316

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 4,487—4,487. That is the number of American servicemembers who perished in Iraq by the time the last combat troops departed in 2011, over a decade ago. Joining them are over 32,000 American servicemembers and civilians wounded in action and tens of thousands more who

struggled—many to this very day—with everything from toxic burn pit exposure to PTSD.

It is with these brave servicemembers and civilians in mind and their families and all who have been impacted by the war in Iraq that the Senate, today, votes to repeal the Iraq authorizations for use of military force from 2002 and 1991. The United States and Iraq—the entire world—have changed dramatically since 2002, and it is time the laws on the books caught up with those changes.

These AUMFs have outlived their use. These repeals will not harm our servicemembers abroad nor will they hinder our ability to keep Americans safe. Every year we keep these AUMFs on the books is another chance for a future administration to abuse them. War powers belong in the hands of Congress so we have an obligation to prevent future Presidents from exploiting these AUMFs to bumble us into a new Middle East conflict.

I am glad that repealing these AUMFs has been a bipartisan effort, and I hope this process can be—it should be—a blueprint for how the Senate works over the next few years. We will have amendments without being dilatory. We will have debate without stall tactics. We will continue to look assiduously, diligently for other opportunities to advance bipartisan bills.

There are many Members and staff I wish to thank for making today's vote possible because this effort has been years—years—in the making.

First, thank you to Chairman MENENDEZ, of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as Senator KAINE. To watch him work on this bill, not only day in and day out, not only month in and month out, but year in and year out because he had a such firm belief that it was the right thing to do, was a joy. Thank you also to Senator YOUNG, who worked very hard to make this happen and who brought so many of his colleagues along.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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